



SUCCESS STORY

Social Enterprise Enjoys Sweet Success

A local group supports its social mission by making candy



Photo: USAID

Visually impaired worker Nedyalka Tomova mixes a batch of halva candy.

In 2005, Krasimira Lazarova was looking for ways to support her goal of building a social integration center for mentally disabled and HIV-positive individuals. Krasimira chairs a Bulgarian organization, Health and Ethics Association, in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria's fifth largest city.

After undergoing a USAID-sponsored training workshop on how to develop a social enterprise, she drew up a business plan that would help her reach her goal. She would open up a production facility to make traditional Bulgarian candy, halva, that would raise funds for the people her association was trying to help. By employing individuals from a vulnerable group, the enterprise would also perform a valuable service to the community. The Bulgarian Union of the Blind agreed to enter into partnership with Health and Ethics to license the halva production facility and find workers.

Within one year, the facility doubled production, and in March 2006 it received a development grant from USAID to launch a promotional campaign and improve its packaging. In addition, the facility was able to hire eight visually impaired workers.

As a result of these efforts, the halva social enterprise signed three new contracts with key clients and created two more jobs for the visually impaired. The social enterprise is now a supplier for a major trading company in Stara Zagora. Krasimira is pleased with the result, and is determined to keep setting and reaching new goals.